IN THE MASTER'S COURTYARD, BEYOND THE SPIRIT HOUSE, GHOST BEETLES FLUTTER IN THE WANING DARKNESS. THE MORNING LIGHT TAKE SLEEP FROM THE EYES OF THEIR MASTER. THE SACRED SAMURAI LAWNS THE CLIPPED PATHWAY, WARRIORS...

HE MUST BE LOST. WHERE COULD HE GO?
GOTTA FIND HIM.
OVER HERE?
MAYBE HE'S OVER HERE!
WELL, HE'S LOST NOW. WE'LL NEVER FIND HIM.
WHO'RE WE LOOKING FOR?
JAIL

PETER RABBIT THE FIRST

Had you been in the small English town of Sawrey in England in the late 1930's, you might have seen Mrs. William Heelis negotiating for a small farm. She would not have been interested in the property for her personal use, having owned her own farm in the area since World War I, rather she would be buying the land to donate it to the National Trust so that it would be preserved rather than subdivided and "developed." Mrs. Heelis raised sheep and she was well known and loved in her community as a benevolent friend and fellow farmer. Some folks, mainly children, knew that Mrs. Heelis had written a great many little books. Did all the watercolor paintings for them, too. Quite the artist-raconteur-naturalist, she was.

You know her as Beatrix Potter.

Born in London on July 28, 1866, the daughter of a pair of uptight Scottish parents, Beatrix Potter grew up a prisoner in her own home. Isolated in the upstairs room of 34 Bolton Gardens, she had neither sibling nor friend to play with, so she cultivated little animal pets which she trained and used as models for her watercolor paintings. One of these was a rabbit (hare, actually, but for most people the two are synonymous). She named him Peter and when the little boy of her nanny, Anna, was sick, she made up a story about Peter and sent it to him in a letter. This note to Noel Moore in September of 1893 became the Tale of Peter Rabbit. She published the first edition herself in 1902. This was shown to Norman Warne and he published the second edition, following it up with her other stories. Beatrix and Norman became close friends during their business relationship and they had become secretly engaged when Warne took ill suddenly and died. Their relationship was not approved by the elder Potters who considered Warne beneath them. Publishing was considered a trade at that time and those who considered themselves uppercrust did not intermarry with tradespeople.

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© CLAY GEERDES, Box 7081, Berkeley, Ca 94707. All Rights Reserved. Logo by Par Holman. This issue dedicated to George Carlson. His stories about the "Pie-Faced Prince of Pretzelberg" in JINGLE JANGLE owed a debt to L. Frank Baum and Lewis Carroll. One of the most ingenious marriages of unique idea and unrepressed art in the history of the medium.* A to sub to CW is $6 until October 1, then $7.50 a year.

Beatrix wanted to escape from her family, but she was always frightened back by her father. THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT is basically her situation. Like hers, Peter's life is totally controlled. If he takes the initiative and does something on his own, he is reprimanded and punished for it. Peter may sneak into the garden for a few brief moments but he is terrified and is punished for his rebellion. Marriage was the only means of escape for a Victorian woman and she could only meet men if her parents arranged such meetings. The Potters did not introduce Bea to anyone, and anyone she met without a "proper" introduction was, of course, inacceptable. The world of Peter Rabbit is not a comfortable one. He is terrified of Farmer McGregor, the only father figure in the story, and his warning mother is actually Bea's nanny,

The approval of Norman Warne and the success of her early books gave Bea the confidence to begin planning her escape. Her parents never approved of her books, but then do our parents ever approve when we choose a path different than the one they dreamed up for us? Bea found a small farm in Sawrey and bought it with her own money. Her rich father gave her nothing and disapproved of her living in the country with "common" people. Nevertheless, her books continued to be successful and Bea spent more and more time on her farm. It was there she met William Heelis, a solicitor, the man who helped her with the financial details of the farm. They married in 1913.

Bea wrote very little after her marriage. She no longer needed to escape through her art and stories. She now had a full life on the farm with her husband. They were active people, never idle. There were always those who sought out and found the famous Beatrix Potter, but she shunned publicity most of the time, refusing interviews. Beatrix Potter was someone she had been, someone who reminded her of an unhappy repressed childhood, not someone she was. She died in 1943 of a bronchial infection, leaving her 17 farms to a National Trust. Her Journals and Artwork have been published in complete volumes you can find in the library. The main biography is THE TALE OF BEATRIX POTTER by Elizabeth Lane. There is an excellent film of this book on video tape.

I have always thought of Beatrix Potter as the grandmother of the mini-comix, because she pioneered that small style, a small book for small hands to hold. Today, of course, many books are published in that format, but it was her decision to self-publish PETER RABBIT just the way she wanted it that showed the way.

-CLAY GEERDES

COMIX PLUGOLA

From COMIX WAVE: MR. TECHNIQUE 1 and ALL IN THE MIND and ACID MAN 1, and 2, all 50¢ mini-comix (all 4 for $2.39 pp).* THE UPS AND DOWNS OF DICKHEAD 2 is 25¢/stamp from J. Becker, 97 Ellwood St, 3-A, NY NY 10040.* RELUCTANT SADIST 5 is $1 pp DZ from Hal Weaver, 7645 Gifford St., Apt 203, Norfolk, VA 23518.* EYEBALLIS 1 is $1.85 pp from Alex LaVerde, 28122 Peacock Ridge, 308, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90274. DZ* FIRECRACKERS 5 and IDIOT SOLVENT 2 are 50¢/stamp ea from William Dockery, 3226-A River Ave., Columbus, GA 31904.* Into BEAT? Water Row Press, POB 438, Sudbury, MA 01776, has a lot of Beat items, the latest of which is KEROUAC'S LAST WORD: JACK KEROUAC IN ESCAPADE by Tom Clark. SASE for catalog and prices.* EL VIBORA 86. $7 from J. M. Berengueur, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, SPAIN. Adults only.* From Mad Dog Graphics, SPLAT! 2 and KEITH LAUMER'S RELIEF 1.* From Aardvark Vanaheim: CEREBUS 95, PUMA BLUES 6* From COMICO: GRENDEL 7, STAR BLAZERS 1, JOHNNY QUEST 11, and lots of ROBOTECH BOOKS.* ALIEN FIRE 2 is out from Krupp, Eric Vincent, the artist, will be at the San Diego Con.* Renegade has collected Valentino's work from various newave and minicomix into VALENTINO, TOO. The cover is a color version of the art which ran on cover of COMIX WAVE 10. Renegade has taken over WIMMEN"S COMIX with #11 so this title may attain some regularity. New Titles include AMUSING STORIES, featuring work by Scott Shaw and Don Dougherty, and a comic about KAFKA* Keep up with Beat/hip/punk with DEADBEAT the tab from Haight-Ashbury. $3.73 pp from 1338 Haight St., S. F. CA 94117.* Three from Fandom House, POB 1348, Denver, COLO 80201: NEAR TO NOW 1, HAP HAZARD 1, and FAITH OF THE FOE.* Though Crumb took a few liberties with the 24 Grimm tale, FRAU HOLLE, his adaptation (MOTHER HULDA) in WEIRDO 19 captures the essence of the story. Be nice to see an entire collection of those old stories illustrated by Crumb.* Diana Schutz was in town and she mentioned that Comico was doing the Max Headroom comic book. I expect Max will be cultic soon. It's the one tv show which has assimilated all the crap from the Road Warrior/Escape to New York/1984 junkola. I liked the episode where all the tv screens went blank and the junkies were buying black market vidtapes on the street. CLAY GEERDES

EDITORIAL

Back in 1973, I had participated in the first comic convention devoted to underground comix, and I was writing regularly about the subject for the Los Angeles FREE PRESS and other tabloids, but there was no specific publication devoted to coverage of all the ugs that were coming out, so I started COMIX WORLD as an informative newsletter. I plugged the new comix as they came out, getting most of my information first hand from the artists, most of whom lived in and around the Bay Area. I wrote articles about the ugs and profiles of the artists for various magazines. As an English professor cum journalist, my orientation was more academic than pop and my opinions about the comix have often differed from those of the artists, publishers, and others working in the field. Cartoonists love gossip and many assumed I was publishing a gossip sheet, but I did not see it that way. Still don't. I have always known intimate facts about the various artists which I never made public. I was never the "Hedda Hopper of the comics" as Don Schenkor once referred to me. I was simply a leg man getting out the information on a subject that was routinely ignored by the establishment press. I always knew who was sleeping with whom, who did what drugs or dealt them, who was reliable and met deadlines and who didn't, who took advances for art never delivered, etc., but I saw no reason to publish such information. What for? It would have been of no interest to the general reader and it was common knowledge to those in the ug comix inner circle. Yet there were always people who thought of me as a gossip columnist and were ignorant of the range and scope of my publication.

I kept copies of the comix, articles about them, clippings, etc., thinking that one day I would do a book about it all. After all, that's what you do with accumulated information, right? Put it in a book, which goes into libraries and makes your facts, opinions, observations, wisecracks, available to those of like mind. I would do a book and connect with other comixologists and we would share Olympian insights re the socio-cultural renaissance of the sixties, the primary manifestations of which were the music and poster and comic art of the period. And, truthfully, there is a great deal of lost lore here, those amazing thinkpieces that filled pages of THE EAST VILLAGE OTHER and SAN FRANCISCO ORACLE, long treatises on drugs, ecology, feminism, racism, pluralism, the decline and fall of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society--lost because there have been several books about the underground press, but no extensive collection of writings, few underground newsfolk having the business acumen of Harlan Ellison who collects everything of his in books like the two volumes of THE GLASS TEAT wherein appear his rants and raves about television from the FREEP. No, I dropped the book and it will remain dropped, not because I lack the attention span of a book person, but because I burned out on the subject.

Or it burned out on me. Or bummed me out. So many of the people dead so young, Bode, Murphy, Sheridan, Irons, others, some anonymous suicides in states I've never visited. Some people who betrayed me, or people I dislike or people who dislike me, people I choose not to write about, cannot be objective about; hell, I'm not cold-blooded enough to print the kind of stuff I read in some publications. When I think about doing it, it makes me stop and ask myself, hey, what's this? Comix were always fun, and this isn't fun.

What I wanted to do was encourage young people to draw, to have a good time with comix, to communicate. I felt like Crumb when he had to tell some super-serious yuppie reporter, "hey, don't take it so serious. It's only lines on paper." I just got sick of writing about the comix BUSINESS all the time. About money, distribution, royalties, blah blah. COMIX WORLD wasn't doing what I wanted to do, so I changed the name to COMIX WAVE and shifted the emphasis to mini and independent comix. I published some mini-comix for the hell of it and developed a system that could keep them going indefinitely without a huge cash outlay. Each mini would sell enough copies to collectors to pay for the next one. There would always be new cartoonists jumping into the game and we would keep art circulating, people networking; thousands of comix would come out. And they have. Designed to encourage new cartoonists, the minis continue to attract pros as well. The original idea was for me to publish the first mini by an artist, cycle it through the mini-series, and return the rights in a few months. The cartoonist would then continue to do his own and meet others by corresponding and trading. That's what the PLUGOLA section is for, to put you in touch with the other members.

If you know anything of postage and printing costs, you know that COMIX WAVE costs money, and doesn't make any. Fine. It's a hobby, not a business. But there are some things you newcomers must understand about this trip. Advertising in CW COSTS two copies of your zine. I keep some of these, sell some of them to even out my expenses, trade some of them, give some to a friend, etc., but this is how I operate. During a year's time, I try to print sample art by member cartoonists. A writer asked me about interviews. I've done a few, but I don't really have the space for them, and, unless the subject has a long career with a lot of significant publications, I don't think an interview is justified. Hey, we're an extended cartooning family here. You want to know more about an artist, write to him. Why go through me? Artist members' addresses are in the PLUGOLA section. As a writer, I have to follow my own inclinations. If CW were nothing but a hypesheet, I wouldn't have any subscribers left. This letter is 14 years old because I am continually finding something new that interests me to write about. If it doesn't interest you as a reader, don't renew your sub; go on to something that does it for you. This year I am doing a background series on children's writers who strongly influenced comic art. I don't know what will do it for me next year. Hey, I'll be another year older and so will you.

CLAY GEERDES